update

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news and events

New York. UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III announced the establishment of a UNDP Gulf Task Force to assist in the formulation of a UNDP action plan for development in the post-war period.

The Administrator, in his opening statement to the Governing Council on 19 February, pointed out that the main challenge for the United Nations is to link the issues of peace, security and development in the post-war period, and by so doing, to heal the wounds of war. Preliminary ideas for UNDP action were elaborated by Dr. Mohamed A. Nour, Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, Bureau for Arab States and Europe, in his statement to the Governing Council on 22 February.

The first step is the re-integration of those who returned from Kuwait and Iraq to their home countries. "Thousands of people who used to be the mainstay of their families back home have had to return in a state of utter dependency on the families and communities," said Dr. Nour. He estimated that one million workers have returned to Egypt, 800,000 to Yemen and 120,000 to Jordan, and another 181,000 to India, 142,000 to Pakistan, and 100,000 to Sri Lanka, among others.

Dr. Nour stated that UNDP, working through its Resident Representatives and with other UN agencies and countries involved, is prepared to support national task forces dealing with the re-integration of returnees. Dr. Nour cited UNDP's "Start Your Own Business" project as an example of UNDP's existing efforts to develop business skills among returnees. Other projects will be geared toward increasing skills of women because of the rise in female-headed households due to the war.

In its post-war planning for Iraq and Kuwait, UNDP is placing high priority on restoring municipal services, said Dr. Nour. UNDP will work with other development agencies to set up operational plans for the rehabilitation of transport and communications networks, human settlements and training and rehabilitation.

UNDP is equipped to undertake country and regional skills development and self-employment programmes, and assist rehabilitation and training programmes for the disabled casualties of the war.

UNDP will also assist a number of developing countries with economic recovery from the crisis. It will work with those countries hardest hit to assess the immediate effects of the war on their economy and to provide policy advice and support to national planning efforts. UNDP will also help diversify exports to minimize dependency on a few markets.

Because the Gulf oil spill and the war itself have had a serious environmental impact on human populations and the natural ecology of the region, UNDP is prepared to fund and mobilize expertise in oil clean-up and other ecological rehabilitation.

Copies of Dr. Nour's remarks are available through UNDP's Division of Information, (212) 906-5312. For further information, please contact the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe, (212) 906-5450 or 906-5461.

Rome. Representatives from 48 donor countries and international organizations attended the second pledging conference on screwworm eradication in North Africa on 12 February. Donors indicated they would pledge US$15 million in addition to the $31 million pledged at the first conference in July, 1990. Libya has committed $27 million to the campaign.

In his opening statement, the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Idriss Jazairy, praised the success of the pilot programme which has contained infestation in a 22,000-square-kilometre area of northwest Libya. He expressed concern, however, over the slow pace of pledged payments.

The pilot programme was initiated and funded by IFAD, and co-financed by the African Development Bank, UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), which is also the

executing agency. Since 1989, UNDP and the other agencies have assisted the government with a programme to control the spread of the fly.

Open wounds in livestock, wild animals, birds and even humans are prone to mass egg-laying by the fly. The screwworm feeds on the flesh of warm-blooded animals, causing their death if not treated. Nearly 3,000 cases a month were reported in Libya last September. If not eliminated now, the infestation could spread to other areas of Africa and southern Europe.

To combat the plague, large quantities of sterile flies must be dispersed in infested areas. Female flies mating with sterile males produce infertile eggs. The pilot programme, which began in December 1990, disperses 20 million sterile flies a week. The flies are obtained from a joint Mexican-US production facility in southern Mexico. This supply is expected to surge to 100 million a week in a few months.

"As a test-run, the operation has successfully established a precise pattern for the enhanced fly dispersal in the large-scale programme," said Mr. Jazairy. "I have reason to believe that in a matter of a few months, the danger of further extension of this plague may well be averted."

Washington, D.C. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), UNDP and the Government of Bhutan will sign an agreement on 6 March to establish a Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation in Bhutan. This long-term endowment for conservation will include training for foresters, ecologists and natural resource managers. Surveys of Bhutan's forests and a review of its protected land will be undertaken. An ecological information base will also be set up under the Trust. Environmental education will be brought into the schools. These and other programmes will be supported from the interest earned from the endowment.

A donor pledging conference is expected to take place later this year to begin raising an initial $20 million for the Trust. The WWF has already agreed to contribute $1 million. The Trust will be governed by a management board representing the Government of Bhutan, the WWF and UNDP. Project management, administration and implementation will be handled by the Bhutan government.

Ouagadougou. The 22 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region met in the Burkina Faso capital on 13-15 February to begin formulating recommendations for the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in Brazil in mid-1992. The meeting aimed at ensuring that topics of particular environmental concern to the Sudano-Sahelian countries will receive attention at UNCED.

Such issues include protection and management of land resources and the related problems of deforestation and desertification. Representatives at the regional consultative meeting also discussed food security, energy security, sustainability of economic growth and employment, and improvement of the quality of life and the environment.

This first consultative meeting was organized by the UN Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), in collaboration with the Permanent Interstate Committee to Combat Drought in the Sahel, and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development. Future meetings of this nature will provide more opportunities to prepare regional reports and develop substantive positions for UNCED on such pressing problems as food security, drought and desertification.

Madison. A disaster management training course was held at the University of Wisconsin on 23 January-8 February. It was part of a joint effort by UNDP and the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) to improve the overall UN response to natural and man-made disasters.

The workshop addressed basic concepts of disaster and emergency management, and introduced ways of mitigating and responding to catastrophes. It also dealt with other emergency issues such as the provision of assistance to large populations who have been displaced by civil conflict.

A 15-member inter-agency team from UNDP, UNDRO, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) participated in the training session. Members of this team will start conducting their own regional and national disaster management courses in May. The country-level workshops will be held in the 50 most disaster-prone developing countries.

Windhoek. The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is

launching a three-year $1.4 million programme to enhance women's involvement in small enterprise development in Namibia. One element of the plan will increase the number of skilled trainers at the Private Sector Foundation, an important centre for transferring basic business skills to women. The Rossing Foundation, which trains people in the fields of welding, plumbing, machine maintenance, carpentry, weaving, tanning and bricklaying, will also be supported in its efforts to bring technical skills to women.

In addition, community development officers will be trained in basic credit principles and rural banking techniques. An information centre will provide data on new technologies, particularly ones related to food production, which could be useful to rural women. Workshops for government officers will be supported to ensure that women's training needs are included in overall policy planning.

The Finnish Committee for UNIFEM has agreed to provide $655,000 to the total programme. WFP and UNICEF will pay for some of the other workshops' costs. To help monitor and carry out the programme, UNIFEM will fund a national project officer to be based with UNDP in Windhoek. The overall programme will be executed by Namibia's National Planning Commission.

projects approved by the action committee

(all approvals subject to modification; sums quoted in US dollars)

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Mali. UNDP will help the government to refine a master plan for water resources which will incorporate recommendations made at a donors meeting in June 1990. Assistance will include a comprehensive evaluation of surface water potential. A survey of the water needs of rural communities will be conducted. Government agencies and ministries will directly participate in drawing up a final plan through a Water Consultative Committee that will be established under the National Directorate for Water and Energy (DNHE). A final version of the Master Plan will be presented to a second donors meeting scheduled for February 1992. Proposed UNDP contribution: $893,845 for a hydrogeologist, water resources planners, subcontracts and preparations for a donors meeting. Executed by the UN Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UN/DTCD) and implemented by the Ministry of Industry, Water and Energy/DNHE. (MLI/90/002)

Madagascar. A credit guarantee fund will be set up with UNDP support to spur local commercial banks to open their lending facilities to small businesses. The five-year project will complement a joint effort by UNDP and the International Labour Organisation in providing credit to small enterprises and managing loan portfolios. Technical assistance will include supervision and training for the screening and approving of loan applications and the administration of credit extension services to borrowers. Proposed UNDP contribution: $5 million for a guarantee fund, a support fund, consultants and training. Executed by UNDP's Office for Project Services (UNDP/OPS) and implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Planning. (MAG/89/002)

Morocco. The purpose of this UNDP project is to develop analytical skills among a nucleus of executives who can guide and monitor a privatization programme. A data bank of financial results, balance sheets and market profiles of each enterprise to be privatized will created. Financial experts will help train staff of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Privatization in data analysis and preparation of privatization procedures and management strategies. The long-range goal is to build national expertise that will ensure successful implementation of the privatization programme and promote economic recovery. Proposed UNDP contribution: $3,475,000. Third-party cost-sharing from the European Community: $2 million. Funds are to be used for experts, training and computer equipment. Government-executed in association with UNDP/OPS and implemented by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Privatization. (MOR/90/013)

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Viet Nam. The government is currently implementing bold economic reforms, including liberalization of foreign trade and devaluation of the currency. Within this framework of reform, the State Planning Committee (SPC) has been charged with designing and implementing a national five-year economic development plan. Experts provided under a UNDP-supported preparatory project will help strengthen the SPC's ability to formulate the country's development plans and prepare economic forecasts. In addition, an English language training programme will be established. Study tours in the areas of development planning, economics and statistics for SPC's staff will be organized. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1,498,500 for experts, subcontracts, study tours and equipment. Executed by the World Bank and implemented by SPC. (VIE/90/007)

Regional projects:

Africa. A shortage of trained drilling engineers and mechanics hampers the development of underground water resources in West African countries. This extension project will provide training to engineers, drilling technicians and mechanics. It will cover the costs of an in-depth study of employment prospects for drillers and drilling engineers in West Africa, given the current economic conditions in the region. The long-term aim is to promote continued training, identification of fellowships and integration of graduates into the job market. Additional UNDP contribution: $829,000 for drilling experts and instructors, an economic planning consultant, training and equipment. Executed by UN/DTCD and implemented by the *Comité Inter-africain d'Etudes Hydrauliques*. (RAF/86/039)

Asia and the Pacific. Governments in Asia and the Pacific region will be assisted in their fight against Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). UNDP will help increase awareness among governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious groups and the private sector of the trends in and implications of the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in the region. Support will also help develop a project to strengthen government planning capabilities in addressing the social and economic impact of AIDS. Ten country and five sub-regional seminars are planned, which will culminate in a major regional conference. Proposed UNDP contribution: $795,000 for a project co-ordinator, consultants, seminars and preparation of training materials. Executed by UNDP/OPS in co-operation with WHO and other UN agencies and NGOs. Implemented by the Ministry of Planning of participating countries. (RAS/90/021)

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